

Wake Up!

Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish."

--Jonah 1:4-6

The men on that ship knew they were in trouble. They rightly feared for their lives. So they began to throw their livelihood overboard into the sea. They didn't know what else to do. Then, finally, the captain went to Jonah and scolded him for not calling out to his God, since all the other gods were apparently sleeping as deeply as Jonah.

Everywhere we look, there are people who do not know the true God. As they face the storms of life, they cry out to their false gods to no avail. Many cry out to the false god mammon, supposing that financial wealth and security will help them weather the storms. Others cry out to the god of alcohol or other substances to dull the pain, but however stoned they get, the storms of their lives don't stop. Others cry out to the false gods of illicit relationships, saying, "Save me from the stresses of life," but it does no good. Millions more turn to the false god of religion, because they don't know the God of relationship. And when unbelievers face a storm severe enough, they might even start throwing everything overboard in their lives, attempting to lighten the load and save themselves.

They don't know what else to do. They do not know the Lord, so they cannot call upon Him for help in times of trouble. For "how shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14) Occasionally, some of them will come to a Christian in their lives and implore him to call upon his God on their behalf. But usually, if no Christian approaches them about Jesus, they just won't know, and they will continue on without any real hope for the future.

Another thing those men in the ship didn't know was that this particular storm had been sent by God. (You might think He had sent the storm because they were sinful and deserved punishment. Or you might think

that He had caused the storm because these men worshiped false gods. But you'd be wrong.) He had sent the storm because the lone man among them who DID know Him was disobeying Him.

When we disobey God's call, and force Him to chasten us, we aren't the only ones who will get hurt. Others are endangered by our disobedience. A storm is never so localized that it affects only one person, even if it is brought on by one individual's disobedience.

Sometimes we might not notice the storms we bring upon ourselves and those around us, because we're desensitized to the Lord's chastening hand. Jonah was very comfortable and content with His disobedience. God hurled a storm his way, and he didn't even notice. Instead, he slept soundly until someone came to him shouting, "Wake up!"

Has God called you to do something you're not doing? If so, this "wake up" call is for you.

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